AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-54. (canceled)

55. (new) Installation for updating an address database with recorded address records, comprising:

at least one processor (14, 15, 42) for receiving and processing address data as shown on items of post;

a memory (22), connected to the at least one processor (14, 15, 42), for storing the address data; and

a database memory (44), connected to the at least one processor (14, 15, 42), containing the address database stored therein, wherein,

the at least one processor (14, 15, 42) is equipped

i) to determine a quality rating for the address data as scanned from an item of post on the basis of predefined criteria, the quality rating indicating how good the address data are,

ii) to derive a name for an addressee from the name lines, to derive an address for the addressee from the address data, to read registered names of persons residing at that address from the address database and to compare these with the name of the addressee and, on the basis of that comparison, to

determine a comparison score per registered name, the comparison score having a higher value the greater the degree of correspondence between the name of the addressee and a respective registered name, the comparison score being derived apart from the quality rating,

iii) to update statistical data relating to said address records stored in said database memory (44), and

iv) to update the content of the database memory (44) on the basis of a rule-based system taking into account the quality rating, the comparison score, and said statistical data.

56. (new) Installation according to claim 55, wherein said statistical data includes at least one of the group comprising:

frequency with which an address record occurs per sorting centre;

dates on which an address record occurred on an item of post;

interval between two successive times that an address record was used on an item of post;

average of length of time between two successive times that an address record was used on an item of post; and

sender's address data in relation to the address records.

57. (new) Installation according to claim 55, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to determine a reliability rating for recognition of the address data and partly to base the quality rating on the reliability rating for recognition.

58. (new) Installation according to claim 55, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to select name lines from the address data, to split the name lines into individual elements in accordance with predefined rules and partly to base the quality rating on the selection of name lines and the splitting thereof.

59. (new) Installation according to claim 58, further comprising:

stored common names, and

wherein the at least one processor is equipped to compare the individual elements of the name lines with the common names, to establish a commonness rating on the basis thereof and partly to base the quality rating on the commonness rating.

60. (new) Installation according to claim 55, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to determine that the address data are new if the comparison scores are relatively low and the quality rating is relatively high.

61. (new) Installation according to claim 55, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to determine that the address data are known if the comparison scores are relatively high and the quality rating is relatively high.

62. (new) Installation according to claim 55, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to determine that the address data are unknown if the comparison scores are relatively low and the quality rating is relatively low.

63. (new) Installation according to claim 60, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to generate an additional address record, containing the address data, in the address database if the address data are new.

64. (new) Installation according to claim 63, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to record one of the following four statuses per address record:

status new, if the address record is generated;

status common, if the associated address data are received from different senders;

status reliable, if the associated address data are regularly read afresh; and

status old, if the address record lapses.

65. (new) Installation according to claim 55, wherein the address database is stored with security, such that either the data stored in the central database can be processed only via predefined rules or some of the data stored in the central database can be accessed via a secure output routine.

66. (new) Installation according to claim 55, further comprising post sorting units (26, 28) for automatic sorting of the items of post (1) making use of the address database.

67. (new) Method for updating an address database in a database memory (44) containing recorded address records, comprising the steps of:

determining a quality rating for the address data as scanned from an item of post on the basis of predefined criteria, the quality rating indicating how good the address data are;

deriving a name for an addressee from the name lines, derive an address for the addressee from the address data, reading registered names of persons residing at that address from the address database and comparing these with the name of the addressee and, on the basis of that comparison, determining a comparison score per registered name, a comparison score having a higher value the greater the degree of correspondence between the name of the addressee and a respective registered name, the comparison score being derived apart from the quality rating;

updating statistical data relating to said address records stored in said database memory (44); and

updating the content of the database memory (44) on the basis of a rule-based system taking into account the quality rating, the comparison score, and said statistical data.

68. (new) Method according to claim 67, wherein said statistical data includes at least one of the group comprising:

frequency with which an address record occurs per sorting centre;

dates on which an address record occurred on an item of post;

interval between two successive times that an address record was used on an item of post; and

average of length of time between two successive times that an address record was used on an item of post;

sender's address data in relation to the address records.

69. (new) Method according to claim 67, comprising the further step of determining a reliability rating for recognition of the address data and partly basing the quality rating on the reliability rating for recognition.

70. (new) Method according to claim 67, comprising the further steps of:

selecting name lines from the address data;

splitting the name lines into individual elements in accordance with predefined rules; and

partly basing the quality rating on the selection of name lines and the splitting thereof.

71. (new) Method according to claim 70, comprising the further steps of:

comparing the individual elements of the name lines with common names; and

establishing a commonness rating on the basis thereof; and

partly basing the quality rating on the commonness rating.

72. (new) Method according to claim 67, comprising the further step of determining the address data are new if the comparison scores are relatively low and the quality rating is relatively high.

73. (new) Method according to claim 67, comprising the further step of determining that the address data are known if

the comparison scores are relatively high and the quality rating is relatively high.

74. (new) Method according to claim 67, comprising the further step of determining that the address data are unknown if the comparison scores are relatively low and the quality rating is relatively low.

75. (new) Method according to claim 72, comprising the further step of generating an additional address record, containing the address data, in the address database if the address data are new.

76. (new) Method according to claim 75, comprising the step of recording one of the following four statuses per address record:

status new, if the address record is generated;

status common, if the associated address data are received from different senders;

status reliable, if the associated address data are regularly read afresh; and

status old, if the address record lapses.

77. (new) Method according to claim 67, wherein the address database is stored with security such that either the

data stored in the central database can be processed only via predefined rules or some of the data stored in the central database can be accessed via a secure output routine.

78. (new) Method according to claim 67, comprising the further step of sorting items of post (1) making use of the address database.

79. (new) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program of instructions executable by a computer to control the computer to execute a method of updating an address database in a database memory (44) containing recorded address records, the method making use of the following steps:

determining a quality rating for the address data as scanned from an item of post on the basis of predefined criteria, the quality rating indicating how good the address data are;

deriving a name for an addressee from the name lines, derive an address for the addressee from the address data, reading registered names of persons residing at that address from the address database and comparing these with the name of the addressee and, on the basis of that comparison, determining a comparison score per registered name, a comparison score having a higher value the greater the degree of correspondence between the name of the addressee and a respective registered name, the comparison score being derived apart from the quality rating;

updating statistical data relating to said address records stored in said database memory (44); and

updating the content of the database memory (44) on the basis of a rule-based system taking into account the quality rating, the comparison score, and said statistical data.

80. (new) The computer-readable medium according to claim 79, wherein said statistical data includes at least one of the group comprising:

frequency with which an address record occurs per sorting centre;

dates on which an address record occurred on an item of post;

interval between two successive times that an address record was used on an item of post;

average of length of time between two successive times that an address record was used on an item of post; and

sender's address data in relation to the address records.

81. (new) A computer storage medium storing a program product for enabling a computer to perform, when executed by a processor of the computer, a method of updating an address database in a database memory (44) containing recorded address records, the method making use of the following steps:

determining a quality rating for the address data as scanned from an item of post on the basis of predefined criteria, the quality rating indicating how good the address data are;

deriving a name for an addressee from the name lines, derive an address for the addressee from the address data, reading registered names of persons residing at that address from the address database and comparing these with the name of the addressee and, on the basis of that comparison, determining a comparison score per registered name, a comparison score having a higher value the greater the degree of correspondence between the name of the addressee and a respective registered name, the comparison score being derived apart from the quality rating;

updating statistical data relating to said address records stored in said database memory (44); and

updating the content of the database memory (44) on the basis of a rule-based system taking into account the quality rating, the comparison score, and said statistical data.

82. (new) The computer storage medium according to claim 55, wherein said statistical data includes at least one of the group comprising:

frequency with which an address record occurs per sorting centre;

dates on which an address record occurred on an item of post;

interval between two successive times that an address record was used on an item of post;

average of length of time between two successive times that an address record was used on an item of post; and

sender's address data in relation to the address records.